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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 001437

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SUBJECT: RAHMON SHOWS OFF DUSHANBE FOR THE CIS SUMMIT; DUSHANBE  
ENDURES

REF: MOSCOW 4849

CLASSIFIED BY: Tom Hushek, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy  
Dushanbe, STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

Corrected Copy: SIPDIS Caption added.

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: The Summits of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Eurasian Economic Cooperation Organization, and Collective Security Treaty Organization, held October 5-7, brought Dushanbe to a standstill, disrupting communications and commerce, and costing a fortune. The Government of Tajikistan spared no expense to prepare for the summits, seeming to ignore President Rahmon's recent edicts to his own citizens to avoid lavish social celebrations. One concrete accomplishment for President Rahmon is the reported agreement with Karimov for Uzbekistan to extend its power grid to facilitate transit of Turkmen electricity to Tajikistan. End Summary.

Paying for Our Glorious Leader

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[1](#)2. (U) Preparations for the summit began months ago. The Government beautified the main avenues of Dushanbe, repainted facades, opened new shops, repaved roads, and strung holiday decorative lighting around buildings, trees, and across main roads. Signs welcoming the visiting delegations in Russian were everywhere -- a marked change from the usual Tajik language slogans and public service banners.

[1](#)3. (C) This facelift was resourced in the same way the Tajik Government (and the former Soviet Government) supports the cotton harvests: people were cajoled and coerced to contribute their time or their money. Authorities reportedly forced businesses to bear the costs of mandatory improvements around their premises. There are also rumors of monetary "contributions" extorted from banks and other businesses to support the off-budget summit expenses. Possibly several hundred jobs were lost when authorities destroyed informal market areas and forced kiosks off main streets approximately two weeks before the summit began. The bridge connecting two of Dushanbe's main streets was closed for reconstruction for two full months before the start of the summit. And public areas such as the Botanical Gardens and other parks were closed for weeks for refurbishments.

[1](#)4. (C) Total government expenses for the summit are unknown.

The government imported several (10 to 20, according to rumors) police cars from Germany to sharpen up the motorcades. Entertainment expenses seem to have been divvied up among various ministries. Ministries and Government departments were each assigned national delegations as their responsibility to house, feed, and entertain (e.g. the Ministry of Power got Georgia). They reportedly did their utmost to impress their guests, arranging gifts for every one of hundreds of delegation members. A contact at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commented to us that the expense imposed on taxpayers was disproportionate to the significance of the summits and made a mockery of the President's recent edicts to Tajiks to waste less money on lavish entertainment. Foreign journalists covering the summits were reportedly surprised by the lavishness of their hosts.

#### Security Inconveniences

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¶5. (U) Tajikistan closed its land borders to all car and truck traffic prior to the summits. We do not know the economic impact of the border closure, but noticed some goods disappearing from store shelves (e.g. most eggs are imported from Iran, and grocery stores ran out of them over the weekend). Throughout the summits, main roads in Dushanbe were closed to all vehicular traffic aside from Tajik Government, summit participants, diplomatic vehicles, limited public transit, and press covering the summit.

¶6. (U) The mood on the streets was calm and pragmatic. Most government offices and international organizations and many businesses in the downtown area had closed in anticipation of the street closures and security hassles during the summit. There were hundreds of people out walking along the main streets as that was the only way to get to work, go shopping, or visit family. Overall, the citizens of Dushanbe were more

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understanding and less hostile to the road closures than we anticipated. Most international and local security professionals anticipated many more problems, harassment, and incidents that never materialized. Notably, this is one of the first times the government released information to the public in advance of an event regarding road closures and movements of VIPs.

¶7. (C) The State Security Committee provided some entertainment in its zeal to protect the summiteers. On October 3 they detained a suspicious party of American and Australian tourists at the Dushanbe train station while they were reading the posted train schedules. (They released the tourists soon afterward). The same day State Security agents showed up at the home of the Director of the National Democratic Institute, to ask him whether he planned to meet with the Ukrainian delegation during the summit. The bemused Director replied that he did not, as he didn't work on Ukrainian issues, and didn't know anyone in the delegation anyway.

¶8. (C) The capacity of the Tajik Government to host a large summit was clearly tested. Security services were stretched to their limit. The entire Ministry of Interior and Security Committee were ordered to remain on call 24-7, sleeping at their offices or duty stations. The Militia Detachment for Special Purposes at the Ministry of Interior had all tactical teams in gear and standing by to respond to any attacks or serious incidents. There were no reported incidents necessitating their activation. The small number of Dushanbe hotel rooms were fully booked, with overflow being housed elsewhere, including at a Russian military base. Conducting business with the Tajik Government during the summit was impossible. (The Director of the Central Bank was spotted supervising the supply of chickens for meals for some of the summiteers.) Our main working-level Foreign Ministry contact was assigned as the ministry's control officer for the Russian delegation, but the actual resources to support the Russian delegation came from the Dushanbe city administration.

¶9. (C) For President Rahmon, the summit weekend appears to have been mainly an opportunity to show off Dushanbe as a clean and thriving capital, far removed from the civil war. He also wanted to show that he can host in fine style -- this is the largest multilateral event he's handled -- and to engage in a little self-aggrandizing. It began with Rahmon's birthday on October 5, an event for which the President's chief foreign policy advisor made personal calls to the entire diplomatic corps soliciting congratulatory messages from heads of state. In addition to the lavish entertainments, Rahmon clearly hoped President Putin and the other heads of state would stay for Putin's birthday on October 7. But Putin flew back to Russia on the sixth, and other delegation heads left at about the same time and missed the end-of-summit fireworks show on October 7. At least Rahmon had a chance to show off his new cars, and the Dachas and guesthouses to which he has devoted several tens of millions of dollars.

¶10. (C) Comment Continued: It is less clear what the summits delivered to Tajikistan, at least in the perceptions of average Tajiks. There was press speculation before the summit that Uzbekistan and Tajikistan might use the occasion to announce that they would no longer require visas of each other's citizens; but this was taken off the agenda before the summit began. There was one specific outcome significant for Tajiks: Uzbek President Karimov reportedly agreed to begin construction of power lines which will facilitate Turkmen electricity to come to Tajikistan, helping to reduce future winter power shortages. (Tajikistan has already begun rationing electricity in some areas, as power supplies dwindle due to declining hydropower production in the winter.) President Putin also expressed continued interest in Russian participation in the Rogun and Sangtuda-I hydropower projects, but we have no word that the Russian-Tajik differences over Rogun have been resolved. Post will follow up with additional summit news as the Government begins to function again. End Comment.  
HUSHEK